Patent Application of

Joseph Chadwick Kinney

for

WRISTWATCH GUARD WITH ACCESS FLAP

Background - Field of Invention

This invention relates to the field of wristwatches. More specifically, the invention comprises an adjustable and flexible protective band which fits over a wristwatch. The invention locks itself to the wristwatch without the need for any separate attachment features.

Background - Description of Prior Art

Wristwatches are one of the great conveniences of the modern age. Unfortunately, due to their exposed position, they are subject to damage. Virtually any type of physical labor puts a wristwatch in danger of being damaged. This is particularly true of construction labor and strenuous outdoor sports - such as water skiing or scuba diving.

For those persons with expensive watches, the only option is often to remove the watch until the physical activity is done, leaving them without the ability to tell time. Alternatively, many wristwatch wearers elect to purchase a second inexpensive "sport " watch. Under either

option, the wearer must remove the more expensive watch and leave it - subjecting it to potential loss or theft. Thus, there has been a long felt need for some type of protective device that would allow a wristwatch wearer to wear the watch during physical activity.

Such protective devices are known in the prior art. One such device is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,155,219 to Anderson (1979). The Anderson device uses a wide leather strap to cover a watch and a band. In its preferred embodiment, the device is intended to replace the conventional watch band. The wearer uses VELCRO attachment features to secure a watch body directly to the device (FIG. 2 of the Anderson disclosure). Alternatively, the user can place the strap around both a watch and its watchband, though it is difficult to see how the device will remain in position if used in this way.

The Anderson device discloses a top flap which is used to cover the face of the watch. The user can look at the watch by peeling back this flap. The flap has securing means so that it can be retained in the open position in order to allow the user to inspect the watch at any time. Unfortunately, the '219 device does not work well without removing the watch band. This fact means that the user must convert his watch to a full-time guarded configuration. From a practical standpoint, only the nicer watches are worth guarding. The '219 is thus disfiguring a nice watch. It is unlikely that the user would want to wear such a bulky and unattractive device on all occasions. Thus, a guard which does not alter the watch would certainly be preferable.

Another type of watch protector is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,277,842 to Richards (1981). The Richards invention uses a flexible cloth cover with a protective crystal positioned over the face of the watch. The device is held in place by the fact that it has a rigid frame member fitting over the body of a square watch. The method appears effective, but it is

significant to note that it is dependent upon the square watch body style, which was prevalent with digital watches. Given the time when the Richards device was created, this feature was not a big disadvantage. Unfortunately, modern watches are seldom square-bodied. Thus, the Richards device suffers from the same inability to remain in position over a watch and band that appears to trouble the Anderson device.

Another approach is taken in U.S. Patent No. 4,509,644 to Kulick (1985). This invention uses an adhesively bonded clear cover to protect the watch body. As is readily seen in FIGs. 4 through 6 of the disclosure, the cover must be carefully tailored to conform to a particular watch body. Thus, a single protector could not serve to protect a variety of watches. This fact is an obvious disadvantage. In addition, the fact that the cover is adhesively bonded to the watch means it cannot be applied and removed repeatedly without disfiguring the watch.

A rigid watch guard is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,835,750 to Quincey (1989). The Quincey device has a circular guard intended to fit over the watch body. It also has two brackets extending from either side of the circular guard which are intended to secure the device to the watch band. Thus, it is possible to use the Quincey device while the watch band is still in place. As may be readily observed, however, the invention can only be used on certain watch styles. It is further restricted by the type of band which the attachment brackets may engage.

U.S. Patent No. 4,916,679 to Agnello (1990) discloses an elastic watch cover with encapsulating side walls. This device is designed to fit around the sides of a watch band, as well as over its top (see FIG. 4 in particular). This feature helps to hold the device in place. The invention also has a flexible aperture through which the watch body is pushed. This aperture allows the user to view the watch. Unfortunately, it also exposes the watch face to damage.

Because the aperture must conform to the watch body, different configurations are needed for different watches (as illustrated in FIGs. 2 and 3).

Another type of watch protector is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,272,682 to Falcone (1993). This invention uses a homogenous piece of flexible material stretched over the watch and band. It is simple in construction - relying on the elastic tension to hold it in place. Unfortunately, it does not allow the user to read the watch while it is in place.

The known devices for protecting a wristwatch are therefore limited in that they:

1. Require the removal of the conventional watch band;
2. Do not remain in position over the watch and band;
3. Must be configured for a particular type of watch; and
4. Disfigure the watch through the use of adhesives and the like.

Objects and Advantages

Accordingly, several objects and advantages of the present invention are:

1. To provide a guard which does not require the removal of the conventional watch band;
2. To provide a guard which will remain in position over the watch and band;
3. To provide a guard which may be used on many different types of watches;
4. To provide a guard which does not disfigure the watch through the use of adhesives and the like;
5. To provide a guard which can be installed and removed while the wristwatch remains in place on the user's wrist;
6. To provide a guard which has a secure storage pocket for retaining small items;

and

7. To provide a guard which allows the user to access the watch face in order to tell time.

Drawing Figures

FIG. 1 is an isometric view, showing the proposed invention.

FIG. 2 is an isometric view showing the proposed invention from another perspective.

FIG. 3 is an isometric view showing a conventional wristwatch.

FIG. 4 is an isometric view, showing the proposed invention in conjunction with a conventional wristwatch.

FIG. 5 is an isometric view, showing a different perspective of the proposed invention in conjunction with a conventional wristwatch.

Reference Numerals in Drawings

10	wristwatch guard	12	guard band
14	body cutout	16	cover flap
18	first VELCRO patch	20	second VELCRO patch
22	flap attachment	24	band cutout
26	third VELCRO patch	28	fourth VELCRO patch
30	storage pocket	32	pocket flap
34	fifth VELCRO patch	36	sixth VELCRO patch
38	pocket flap attachment	40	pocket seam
42	wristwatch	44	watch body
46	watch band	48	band attachment

50	adjustment break	52	upper portion
54	lower portion	56	pocket opening
58	seventh VELCRO patch	60	eighth VELCRO patch

Description of the Invention

FIG. 1 depicts the proposed invention prior to its application to a wristwatch. Wristwatch guard **10** has two general regions - upper portion **52** and lower portion **54**. It consists primarily of the strap denotd as guard band **12**, and various other features attached to guard band **12**. Lower portion **54** is transected by adjustment break **50**. The amount of overlap between the two portions of guard band **12** found at adjustment break **50** allows the diameter of guard band **12** to be adjusted in order to accomodate different wrist sizes.

Once the appropriate diameter for guard band **12** has been established, the two portions at adjustment break **50** must be locked together. This function may be accomplished by a variety of conventional means. Turning briefly to FIG. 2, the user will note that the opposing portions of guard band **12** found at adjustment break **50** are covered by third VELCRO patch **26** and fourth VELCRO patch **28**. These two VELCRO patches will adhere to each other when pressed together, thereby maintaining the diameter set for guard band **12**.

Returning now to FIG. 1, more elements of the proposed invention will be explained. Upper portion **52** of wristwatch guard **10** has body cutout **14** passing completely through it. Body cutout **14** is oriented in a direction transverse to the axis of the wearer's wrist. At each end of body cutout **14** is a band cutout **24**. The result is an opening in the shape of the capital letter "I." The purpose of this I - shaped opening is to admit a watch body, which will be explained subsequently. Wristwatch guard **10** is made of a very pliable material such as neoprene. This

material selection is essential to the function of the invention, as the I-shaped opening must be able to deflect and slip around a watch body. The opening must then close snugly behind the watch body to hold it in place.

Upper portion **52** of wristwatch guard **10** also has cover flap **16**. Cover flap **16** is attached to guard band **12** by any conventional means - with stitching or adhesives along flap attachment **22** being two particularly effective methods. FIG. 1 shows cover flap **16** in its open position. It can be retained in this open position by pressing seventh VELCRO flap **58** - located on the back side of cover flap **16** in the view shown - against eighth VELCRO patch **60** (located on guard band **12**).

Cover flap **16** can be closed across upper portion **52** by moving it in the direction indicated by the arrow. It can then be retained in the closed position by pressing first VELCRO patch **18** against second VELCRO patch **20**.

FIG. 2 illustrates more elements of the proposed invention. Lower portion **54** has storage pocket **30** formed on one side. Storage pocket **30**, being roughly rectangular in shape, is joined to guard band **12** on three sides - along pocket seam **40**. The fourth side comprises pocket opening **56**. Pocket opening **56** is sized to allow small items - such as coins or jewelry - to be placed within storage pocket **30**.

Pocket flap **32** is provided immediately adjacent to pocket opening **56**. Pocket flap **32** is illustrated in the open position. Once items are placed within storage pocket **30**, it is desirable to be able to secure them therein. Pocket flap **32** is therefore configured to close over pocket opening **56**. Pocket flap **32** is retained in its closed position by pressing fifth VELCRO patch **34** aganst sixth VELCRO patch **36**.

Storage pocket **30** is particularly useful when wristwatch guard **10** is used in water sports. If the user is water skiing or riding a jet ski, he or she often has no place to secure coins, jewelry, and the like. Storage pocket **30** solves this problem.

Turning now to FIG. 3, the application of the proposed invention to a wristwatch will be explained. FIG. 3 shows wristwatch **42**. Most wristwatches have common features. These include watch body **44**, watch band **46**, and band attachments **48**. Those skilled in the art will realize that watch band **46** generally has some type of adjustment feature - such as a buckle or clasp. This type of feature is not significant to the present invention and, accordingly, it has not been illustrated.

FIG. 4 shows wristwatch guard **10** attached to wristwatch **42**. Wristwatch guard **10** is installed by pressing watch body **44** through body cutout **14** (reference FIG. 1). Watch band **46** then fits through the two band cutouts **24**. Body cutout **14** then closes beneath watch body **44**. Those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that the interaction of watch body **44** and body cutout **14**, along with the interaction between watch band **46** and the two band cutouts **24**, holds wristwatch **42** firmly in place. Once installed in the position shown, the user then adjusts the diameter of guard band **12** and closes adjustment break **50** as described previously. Watch band **46** is thereby completely covered by wristwatch guard **10**.

The reader should note that this installation procedure may be performed while wristwatch **42** is in place on the user's wrist. Likewise, the device may be removed while wristwatch **42** remains in place. In order to remove wristwatch guard **10**, the user opens adjustment break **50** and simply tugs upward on the device. Body cutout **14** and band cutouts **24** will then slip over watch body **44** and watch band **46**, respectively.

The reader will observe that the face of wristwatch **42** is exposed in the configuration shown in FIG. 4. Cover flap **16** may be secured in this folded-back position, as explained previously. This position allows the observer to see the face of wristwatch **42** and easily tell the time. Of course, the user may often wish to protect the face of wristwatch **42**.

The closure of cover flap **16** is best illustrated in FIG. 5. Cover flap **16** may be closed in the direction indicated by the arrow. This places cover flap **16** over watch body **44**. Cover flap **16** is secured in the closed position by pressing first VELCRO patch **18** against second VELCRO patch **20**. In this configuration, all components of wristwatch **42** are protected.

Summary, Ramifications, and Scope

Accordingly, the reader will appreciate that the proposed invention protects a wristwatch from damage. The invention has further advantages in that it:

1. Does not require the removal of the conventional watch band;
2. Will remain in position over the watch and band;
3. May be used on many different types of watches;
4. Does not disfigure the watch through the use of adhesives and the like;
5. Can be installed and removed while the wristwatch remains in place on the user's wrist;
6. Has a secure storage pocket for retaining small items; and
7. Allows the user to access the watch face in order to tell time.

Although the preceding description contains significant detail, it should not be construed as limiting the scope of the invention but rather as providing illustrations of the preferred embodiment of the invention. Thus, the scope of the invention should be fixed by the following

claims, rather than by the examples given.